



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

## State Senate Passes Bill to Open Up “Custom Crush” Wine Sales

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WATERTOWN (January 27, 2010)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said today that a bill passed in the Senate to allow the state’s winemaking industry to engage in “custom crush” sales will enable a growing segment of the state’s agriculture industry to build on its recent success.

“New York State has a growing and successful wine industry. This bill will enable our wineries to open up a new niche market for the consumer who wants to be a part of the winemaking process,” Sen. Aubertine said. “By loosening restraints on our wineries it will open up new opportunities for growth in an industry that has become an important part of the economy in Central and Northern New York.”

Custom crush allows individuals who will ultimately purchase the wine to participate in its creation, from choosing what type of grape is to be used, to assisting in its actual production. This experience is a growing facet of winemaking across the nation, embraced in other states such as California, Michigan and Virginia. The Senate bill, which lifts the prohibition of these types of sales, passed 62-0.

New York's wine industry has grown by more than 10 percent since 2004, when a study found that the ripple effect of the industry amounted to more than \$3.4 billion in annual economic impact. A 2008 study released recently by the New York State Wine and Grape Foundation, shows the ripple effect has grown to \$3.74 billion, including 39,000 jobs with \$1.5 billion in wages, \$508 million in direct winery sales, and nearly \$400 million in tourism revenue from nearly 5 million wine tourists.

New York State is home to more than 200 wineries and 1,000 family owned vineyards, from Long Island to Ogdensburg, and Lake George to Finger Lakes. Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties are home to a half a dozen wineries, a wine trail, and several other wineries in neighboring counties.